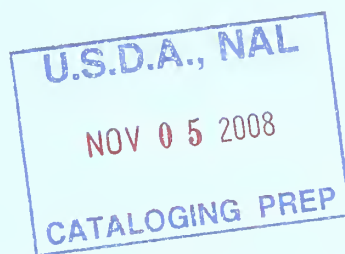


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PROBLEMS, PRINCIPLES AND POSSIBLE
METHODS FOR COMMUNICATION
WITH ILLITERATES AROUND THE WORLD

by

Max K. Lowdermilk

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FOREWORD

This paper was prepared as part of the requirement in the "Comparative Extension Education Seminar," Graduate Division of Extension and Adult Education, Cornell University, Spring Semester, 1964. It was presented to Seminar members representing the United States and twelve countries abroad. At the request of the Cornell director of Peace Corps Training, the paper was duplicated and presented to about 100 advanced trainees preparing for work in Latin America.

Mr. Lowdermilk graduated from Duke University with a B.A. degree and in 1955 from Duke Divinity School with a B.D. degree. He was then appointed to the Board of Missions of the Methodist Church to work in rural education in West Pakistan. After a year of language study he and his wife served for five years in rural school development in West Pakistan.

He then returned to the States for further graduate study. For this he enrolled in Cornell University's graduate program of Extension and Adult Education and was awarded the M.S. degree in September, 1964. He immediately returned for further work in West Pakistan.

Mr. Lowdermilk and I ask readers to please understand that this paper is not intended to be a finished product either in content, organization, grammar or production. Available time did not permit further refinements. We will both be pleased, however, if the material is found useful to others interested in the problem of reducing illiteracy wherever it may be found.

J. Paul Leagans
Professor
Extension Education

Ithaca, 1964

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INTRODUCTION

At a special meeting of the Inter-American Economic and Social Council of the Alliance for Progress in August of 1961 at Montevideo, Uruguay, a delegate posed a very serious question: "How can we influence almost seven million illiterates throughout the Andean Zone of Quechua and Aymara origin?"

Mr. Patino went on to indicate from census statistics that between 1940 and 1961 the population of illiterates in the area had increased from a little over two million to about 3.5 million. (Patino, p. 1)

The problem raised by the delegate concerning the Andean Zone is now being raised all around the world where adult literacy and school programs are hard pressed to keep abreast of the ever mounting pressures of population. While great advances have been made in the teaching of literacy, very little research has been done to help us know how we can best communicate with the illiterate.

Many who are working in extension programs in various parts of the world agree that we do not know enough about the field of communication with the illiterate at the present time. (Patino, 4) Very little experimentation in use of communication media with illiterates has been carried out. So, many times, we are forced to depend on conventional media for communication. More often, unfortunately, we discover that the official attitudes regarding the millions of illiterates are ones of indifference, contempt or pity, or else their needs are completely ignored.

Mr. Patino reminds us that the Communists, especially in Latin America, have gained much advantage out of utilizing indigenous means of communication to infiltrate the illiterate masses. (Patino, 6)

Statement of the Problem

The problem before us is basically "What can we learn from various disciplines that will give us, as extension workers, some basic insights into how we can effectively communicate with illiterate farm people in the areas of the world where we serve."

What is Illiteracy?

As we have used the word "problem" in the title of this paper, we must now analyze some of the many problems that will confront us.

We must ask who is an illiterate or, as some prefer, "nonliterate" or "preliterate?"

We find that there is no general agreement on a definition of either "literacy" or "illiteracy" which would be applicable to all countries and territories. It has been indicated repeatedly in United Nations and UNESCO studies that there is a wide range of criteria in use. (Basic Facts...UNESCO, 3)

UNESCO, in 1951, attempted to establish the definition, "A person is considered literate who can read with understanding and write a short simple statement on his everyday life."

Confusion of Criteria: Why?

The next year, 1952, UNESCO again was worried about the unreliable statistics on literacy. The following reasons were given to indicate the extent of the problem.

1. Many countries with low literacy rates have discontinued asking questions on literacy in their censuses.
2. Many countries where illiteracy is known to be relatively high have not yet taken a complete national census.
3. The definition of literacy varies in different countries from "ability to read" to "ability to read and write a letter."
4. Some countries have figures on those age 10 and over or age 15 and over; others have them on all ages; some do not state what base they use.

For example, we note that Peru in the 1940 census listed 57 percent illiteracy among those in her population 10 years of age and over. Pakistan in its 1951 census of all ages listed 86 percent illiteracy. (Basic...UNESCO, 10)

A Functional Definition

By 1962 the UNESCO definition became more comprehensive: "A person is literate when he has acquired the essential knowledge and skills which enable him to engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning in his group and community and whose attainments in reading and writing and arithmetic make it possible for him to use these skills toward his own and the community's development." (Griffin, 204)

It appears that as literacy becomes of greater value in various countries, and indeed throughout the world, more functional definitions emerge. For example, the definition of literacy in this country has become more functional through the years. At the time of World War I "illiterate" meant anyone who could not read or write. This was the definition used until about 1940 when in the new census anyone was termed "illiterate" who had less than five years of schooling. ("Not so Illiterate After All," 676)

Goldberg says that at the time of World War II an "illiterate" for U. S. Army purposes was one who could not read and write at the 4th grade level. (Goldberg, 288)

Since we are concerned with helping people to develop themselves and their communities, let us for the purposes of this discussion accept the "ideal" definition of literacy as given by UNESCO in 1962. This is a very functional definition which makes our problem even broader in scope, because the requirements for literacy in most of the world are much less.

Let us keep in mind the functional definition of illiteracy. As we use the term "illiterate" in the remainder of this paper we will have in mind not only the preliterate who has never learned to read or write, but also that person who is not able to utilize educational tools once acquired.

As mentioned earlier, it is next to impossible to even give an estimate of the number of individuals throughout the world who are not literate by any definition, simply because we do not have reliable data.

The Scope of Our Universal Problem

In recent years the nations around the world have placed much emphasis on literacy programs. Statements such as the following often are found in the literature: "The essential requirement to win the battle against illiteracy is the necessity for a world wide determination - a universal will - that the battle can be fought and won within a reasonable time." (Griffin, 204)

In these times of increased expectation it does seem reasonable that both literacy and good health are possibilities for most of mankind. This is good and everyone would agree that in some way the battle must be won. President Hollis L. Caswell of Teachers College of Columbia University has amplified our hopes more literally when he states that "people around the globe cannot benefit from modern industrialization and economic aid unless they are literate and educated." (Hildreth, 372)

If this statement is taken at purely face value, we can assume that the millions of illiterates around the world are in no way benefiting from modern industrialization and from the billions of dollars of economic aid being used to help raise their level of living. While this is an overstatement, data do show that literacy is a very good index of a nation's social and economic development. However, literacy rates also show that countries may be more or less literate than their level of industrial development would suggest.

As Golden has stated, "Literacy is not only an index of socio-economic development, but also it functions significantly in the transfer of underdeveloped countries into modern urban industrial nations, because literacy and education stand in a mutually dependent relationship with other aspects of modernization." (Golden, 6)

This is not to suggest that we should under-rate the value of literacy. We realize that often it is the passport out of a traditional society into a more modern one.

The statement of President Caswell taken at face value, then, is not valid. The question of "benefit" is probably one of degree. We do know of nations at this time which have high illiteracy rates but which are making progress in development. We realize that with the tremendous numbers of illiterates we cannot make them all literate first and then try to help them to help themselves to better levels of living. The problem is how can we effectively communicate with these people now while they are still illiterates. We must never assume that people who are nonliterate cannot learn effectively. If we do this we are setting up a "literate" bias or prejudice which we need to put away from our minds.

The Size of the Problem

After the 1950 census the illiteracy picture around the world looked pretty bad. It was estimated that about 700 million adults were illiterate. This represented about two-fifths (40 percent) of the total world population 15 years old and over.

Almost half of all the countries and territories (97 out of 198) were believed to have 50 percent or more illiteracy among the adult population. In about one-third of all the countries there were at least a million adult illiterates in each country.

At this time UNESCO showed that over the last 25 years or so very little reduction had been made in the absolute size of the world's illiterate population. The rapid growth of population is just not being matched, even today, by education of children and adults. (Griffin, 200)

Hildreth shows from UNESCO statistics that illiteracy will not be done away with until governments are able to provide more primary and elementary education for their children. In 1961 only 57 percent of all the world's children of primary school ages were regularly enrolled in school. As well, she points out that for the most part adult literacy programs "tend to lapse after the initial enthusiasm dies down." (Hildreth, 371)

Cortright suggests that the number of adult illiterates around the world is rapidly increasing although the percent of illiterates is decreasing. For example, in Brazil, illiteracy has dropped 15 percent in 50 years, but the number of illiterates has increased 25 percent. (Cortright, 207)

As a summary statement, we can say that the problem of illiteracy is critical. The absolute size of the population of "illiterates" is tremendous. As programs of universal and adult literacy education are pushed on every level, we who work with "illiterate" people must push the fight to learn how to communicate with the illiterate now! There is not enough time to wait until he achieves literacy.

No nation can afford to wait until its citizens are functionally literate before initiating programs of economic, agricultural, and community development. We must start where we are now.

Consequences of the Inability to Communicate

There is evidence to indicate that the inability of workers to communicate with illiterates has been a major factor in failure of community development projects. Failure to adopt and lack of interest and participation are attributed to the lack of communication with illiterate farmers in a recent study in a development block in India. (Shah, 18) Faulty communication with illiterates is given as a major barrier to rural change in an East Bihar community. (Akhurari, 212)

Habito, writing about the Philippines, says that very little attention has been given to educational programs for illiterate farmers. He points out that agricultural education is stimulated at every other level but misses the adult farmer. (Habito, 6)

It seems almost axiomatic that extension workers tend to give more time to and to place more emphasis on working with those individuals with whom they feel they can communicate best and who, consequently, are rapid adopters. (Leagans, class notes)

There is always the tendency to spend time with "those who need and understand our programs" rather than with those who perhaps don't realize many of their needs and who can't understand the programs as we present them.

Leagans reminds us that "the extension worker has both a grave and an exciting responsibility in the communication process in rural development." (Leagans, 4)

If we could only evaluate the cost in time, patience, progress, people and development already wasted in the world today because man is unable to communicate with man, especially literate man with illiterate man, we would have cause to pause and ponder.

Important Questions!

We will be confronted with a number of important questions in the remainder of this paper. A few of these are: What is an illiterate like in his social behavior? What are his problems in a society that places more and more stress on literacy? How does the illiterate differ from the literate in his ability to learn? How does communication with illiterates differ from communication with literates? What would theory lead us to expect concerning differences? What do the present data show about the relative success of various conventional and non-conventional media used with illiterates? What conclusions are possible? How should we as extension workers go about communicating with illiterates? What principles can be drawn and under what conditions do they apply to our task? These questions are raised in order to point the way for our understanding of the complexity and challenge that the problem presents to us as extension educators.

The Phenomenon of "Illiteracy"

Let us attempt to look at the phenomenon of illiteracy in two different settings. It is assumed that the illiterate in a society which takes literacy pretty much for granted has certain problems that an illiterate in a society which is for the most part illiterate does not have.

THE ILLITERATE IN A LITERATE SOCIETY

As societies around the world place more and more value on literacy and, consequently, achieve a higher level of literacy, the problems and insights given here will prove more and more valuable. These findings might also help us to understand the behavior of illiterates in group meetings where quite a number of the actors are literate.

Socialization with Literates

A few years ago Freeman and Kassebaum discussed this problem.

Considerable emphasis is given to the role of communication in the functioning of an ongoing society, because in the ideal case we assume the existence of actors who, to a greater or lesser degree, understand one another. In any complex interaction process, language is important not only in terms of explicit denotations, but because of the subtleties, nuances, and connotations implicitly expressed and in the images and sentiments therewith called forth in the actors. Especially where much of the general orientations of a society are indicated and expressed by formal communication media, socialization and adult role playing necessitate a minimum level of language skill. Language in this sense is a setting for action.

A wide range of problems arises with the presence of a sizable number of individuals (illiterates) in the social system who have less than adequate facility for participation in the (formal) communication process and consequently inadequate understanding of what is communicated. For such actors to survive, they must order their conduct by means of techniques which only to a very limited degree employ language symbols. (Freeman and Kassebaum, 370)

Basic Sociological Principles for Understanding

These authors have given several hypotheses which relate to the conduct of illiterates in a literate society.

1. "The more abstract the symbolic organization of the situation, the more probable it is that the illiterate will withdraw from the situation." (Freeman and Kassebaum, 372)

In such situations the illiterate will do one of three things: One, he will seek compliance, i.e. take the role indicated by the group. He will act as an illiterate is expected to act. Secondly, he may try to conceal his illiteracy and pass for a literate. Thirdly, he may in repetitive situations figure out ways to substitute his actions for acceptable behavior, i.e. figure out a system for counting money even though he does not know mathematics.

2. "Successful participation in illiterate-literate interaction requires the development on the part of the illiterate of strategy related to reducing the "communication gap" which exists in the symbolic ordering of the situation." (F. and K., 372)

In a society which is for the most part literate, great value is placed on literacy. This often creates a phenomenon of shame or guilt in the illiterate actor who views his state as that of an inferior. Those who have worked with illiterates in a setting where most of the participants are literate will remember occasions where shame does occur in the illiterate when he has lost group support.

3. "Participation on the part of the illiterate in situations where the norms severely stigmatize illiteracy is related to the extent that the personality of the illiterate is characterized by such phenomena as shame." (F. and K., 373)

Often the illiterate refuses to participate with those who remind him of his "inferior status." This often is a problem in countries where literacy is being given more and more status and prestige.

4. "To the degree that the functional aspects of the illiterate in the system outweigh his dysfunctional aspects the society will be ambivalent and by the employment of particular evaluations will provide for his partial integration." (F. and K., 373)

This is seen by the fact that of those "illiterates" in the U. S. Army in World War II, the larger percentage listed farming, truck driving and construction as previous occupations. (Edgerton, 525)

It may be pointed out that when some part of the social system has an investment in continued illiteracy then the illiterate with that portion of society is able to participate freely.

Such institutions as credit buying, loan companies (money lending), soothsayers, faith healers, politicians and quack doctors generally have a vested interest in the society of the illiterate.

Those who have worked in areas of the world where money lenders, holymen and quack doctors operate, readily recognize their effectiveness in communicating with and swindling illiterate people.

5. "The more essential the illiterate is for the economic life of the community, the more likely it will be that the community will develop techniques for the partial integration of the illiterate."
6. "The more available the illiterate as a consumer market, the more likely that the social system will tailor certain marketing practices to provide for his partial integration." (F. and K., 374)

This is seen sometimes in utilization of gestures, pantomime, repetition of instructions and close supervision of simple tasks when working with the illiterate.

It seems that, in almost any society, there are forces operating to make the illiterate literate and to keep him in his position of illiteracy.

Socialization with Other Illiterates

Freeman and Kassebaum, in their discussion of the illiterate in the United States, also mentioned that there are some significant characteristics of the way they conduct themselves in their interaction with other illiterates.

1. They express themselves in their own institutionalized terms.
2. They form and recognize symbols of prestige and disgrace.
3. They evaluate situations in terms of their own norms and in their own idiom.
4. In their interrelations with each other the mask of accommodative adjustment drops. (F. and K., 374)

In a society which places extreme value upon education and literacy, the life of the illiterate is not easy. In the U. S. Army during World War II, it was discovered that adjustment and food aversion were much higher among illiterate soldiers. It was found, also, in the research of that time that the illiterate adult male was more apt to be neurotic than was the literate male. (Altus, 430)

Ability of Illiterates to Learn: One Experiment

Great interest in the problems of illiteracy came at the time of World War II when many American draftees were found to be functionally illiterate. Nevertheless they were inducted into the armed services and given special training, and quite a lot of research on them was carried out by educators and psychologists who likewise were drafted or volunteered for service.

Some of the findings will be summarized.

1. Among illiterates there are wide individual differences. They should not be massed together. (Altus, 475)

2. Many illiterates have normal intelligence and can learn rapidly when proper methods of instruction are utilized. In the armed forces 85 out of every 100 illiterates became literate within a 12 to 15-week period, i.e., achieved the 4th grade level. (Edgerton, 525)

3. It cannot be assumed automatically that illiterates are dull because they do not possess certain verbal skills. (Altus, J. of Applied Psy., 160) Many illiterates not only possess skills but are very gifted and outstanding personalities. (Weber, 18) Army tests show that they are frequently of average intelligence and some even are above average. (Lewis, 11)

4. Ginzberg and Bray, The Uneducated, and Goldberg, Army Training of Illiterates in World War II, point out that well over 80 percent of those received for special training were found to be acceptable or good soldiers. (Goldberg, 293)

It must be mentioned that this was a special type of training under controlled conditions. The Army had control of these persons 24 hours a day, the men were motivated to learn to read and write letters because they wanted to communicate with families and friends, the Army had unlimited funds and the best qualified instructors and supervisory personnel were available. This was also a new venture and there was no opposition to experimentation as would normally have been encountered in civilian life. These and other factors indicate that such a program could hardly be duplicated elsewhere in a "free-choice" society. (Goldberg, 192)

Nevertheless, some of the methods and principles used in this special training program could prove helpful to us in a general understanding of how the Army was able to teach illiterates so much in such a short period of time.

The purpose of the program was to teach these men citizenship, first aid, hygiene, geography of global warfare, military dress, and the manners and etiquette of military life, and such military subject matter as varieties of enemy planes, tank principles of scouting and patrolling, parts of the rifle and other weapons, and map reading. (Goldberg, 143-144)

Army Policy in Training

Goldberg gives several reasons why the program was so successful.

1. The careful selection of men for training.
2. The clear formulation of the objectives of the program.
3. The development of specially appropriate instructional materials and training aids.

4. The all-inclusive nature of the curriculum.
5. The establishment of standards of performance.
6. The small size of teaching groups - 15 or fewer in classes.
7. The diversified methods of instruction.
8. The provision for differential rates of progress.
9. The continuous psychological study of the men.
10. The careful selection of instructor and supervisor personnel.
11. The provision for pre-service and continuous in-service training of instructor and supervisor personnel.
12. The continuous appraisal of the results of training.
(Goldberg, 283-285)

Army Principles of Teaching

The instructors were carefully trained in the types of presentations, explanations, and demonstrations to give in their classes. They:

1. Spoke clearly and in very simple terms.
2. Presented materials slowly.
3. Avoided lengthy explanations.
4. Allowed the men to participate in discussions with the principal in mind that learning takes place when men themselves are active.
5. Taught in a manner that would appeal to a multiplicity of senses.
6. Taught one skill at a time.
7. Were very patient with the learners. (Goldberg, 187)

Some Army Methods of Teaching

The methods, techniques or devices used in teaching these men were:

1. Visual aids - flash cards, posters, charts, films, models, objects, sand tables and topographic models, photographs and carefully selected pictures.
2. Demonstrations.

3. Lectures.
4. Discussions.
5. Drill.

In an evaluation of the use of visual aids it was discovered early in the program that:

1. Visual aids used indiscriminately were of little value.
2. Visual aids profusely displayed in the teaching situation were distracting.
3. Blackboard work was not developed properly.
4. Demonstrations done properly were very effective.
5. Constant drill was particularly important for recall and the learning of skills. (Goldberg, 189)

Army Teaching: Evaluation

Several other principles emerged from this evaluation of teaching illiterates in a controlled environment.

1. Illiterate men profit from a considerable amount of over-learning.
2. Forgetting takes place unless opportunity is provided for frequent repetition and recall of material.
3. Drill is a means to an end only, and not an end in itself. (Goldberg, 190)

Much was learned from this controlled experiment with illiterates which will not be helpful to those of us teaching in free choice and voluntary situations. However, it might be useful for us to keep in mind that:

1. Illiterates, as well as literates, learn best when learning activities are related to real situations.
2. Systematic appraisals to estimate needs, determine guidance, and evaluate growth are vital in teaching.
3. Building and utilizing a special vocabulary fitted to the learner's ability is important.
4. Clear objectives and specific purposes and objectives defined in terms of steps worked out to attain them are valuable.

5. Strong interest and motivation, on the part of both teacher and learner, are important.

6. Using a variety of visual aids and methods related to the subject matter and the needs of the learners, is desirable. (Witty, 134-135)

Findings of British educators during the 1940's as they faced the problems of educating illiterate adults would seem to be in agreement with American findings. (Burt, 24)

THE ILLITERATE IN A PRELITERATE SOCIETY

The Psychology of Preliterate People

The term "preliterate society" here will refer to those societies where the majority of people never have had an opportunity to learn the skills of reading and writing. Let us ask humbly, not only what we can learn about them, but also what we can learn from them as we proceed.

Some of the relevant findings of the social and behavioral sciences will be utilized as we strive to gain insight into the psychology of illiterate people.

Earlier we discovered that the illiterate in a largely literate society has quite a lot of emotional and psychological disturbances due to extreme social pressures. In a largely preliterate society, to the contrary, mental breakdowns in the form of schizophrenia, delusional systematization, and paranoid, paranoiac, or paraphrenic behavior seldom are seen. (Carothers, 307)

Carothers, in his report, "Culture, Psychiatry and the Written Word," gives some interesting principles as to how the illiterate mind functions.

1. Thinking and behavior in nonliterate societies are partly governed by the supposed "power of the spoken word." (Carothers, 311)

2. Words lose much of their emotional overtones and emphases when written down.

3. Literacy operates to destroy the magic power of words. It has been observed that some nonliterate societies give their children, in addition to their generally known names, secret and thus invulnerable names.

4. In the nonliterate world a thing often exists by virtue of its name. Even the imagined word as well as the spoken word connotates something in the outer world. (Carothers, 309-310)

5. Often the eye, especially in some African societies, is regarded less as a receiving organ than as an instrument of the will, the ear being the main receiving organ.

6. In many nonliterate societies thought and behavior are not seen as separate; both are seen as behavior. An example of this would be those that would refer to the cultures where children are taught to fear certain strange thoughts. (Carothers, 316)

7. Some nonliterate people do not use abstractions in their reasoning processes. An example is given of the Eskimos of the Bylot and Buffin Islands in Northern Canada who were essentially a non-literate people some years ago. It was discovered by Scherman that their language was devoid of abstract words.

There are no abstract words and all verbs are verbs of action. The Eskimos though extraordinarily quick and alert mentally are not thinkers in our sense - and their language is a reflection of their life and character. It is a language of peoples whose lives are lived in their bodies and not in their minds. (Carothers, 314)

In working with illiterate Punjabi farmers I have discovered that it is almost useless to attempt to explain anything with abstract vocabulary. The best communication is that wherein the interaction of the communicator and his audience is on a mutual level of interest and understanding.

8. Nonliterate rural populations live largely in a world of sound, in contrast to western Europeans who live largely in a world of vision.

Sounds are in a sense dynamic things or at least are always indicators of dynamic things - of movements, events, activities, for which man when largely unprotected from the hazards of life must be ever on the alert. Whatever form they take - thunder, the burble of running water, the snapping of twigs, the cries of animals, the beating of drums, the voice or music of man - they are usually of direct significance and often even of peril for the hearer. Sounds lose much of this significance in western Europe where man often develops - must develop - a remarkable ability to disregard them. Whereas for Europe "seeing is believing" for the rural Africans, reality seems to reside far more in what is heard and what is said. (Carothers, 310)

At this point we will add other principles and guidelines related to the nature of the illiterate mind from the findings of others.

9. Oral communication helps to create solidarity in groups while literacy and the printed page tend to loosen these bonds and create space around people. (Riesman, 34)

Riesman argues that this is why the ability to read in many countries is associated with urban life and lack of social solidarity. He views the book as a type of "invisible monitor" which sets the reader apart from his group and its emotions. Sometimes his argument would indicate that a society loses something in the process of becoming literate.

When the written word enters a preliterate culture it tends to blot out for the most of us our childhood imagery.
(Riesman, 10)

Other writers have added their observations of the world of illiterates. Schramm finds that:

1. The illiterate moves through a slower temp of life than do literates.

2. The world of the illiterate is not manipulative, instrumental; life is viewed as a whole. (Schramm, 175-177)

The Intelligence of "Illiterate" People

Perhaps one of the largest obstacles in communications with the illiterate is that of the attitude and self understanding of the communicator himself. The communicator some way must communicate the feeling to his audience that he does not look upon them as inferiors.

Already we have said that illiterates are individuals and should not be viewed as one large dull mass of humanity. Unfortunately, the word "illiterate" has taken on increasingly derogatory meaning in societies which are now pushing hard to become literate. From all available research it seems clear that illiterates are often "intelligent," bright, progressive, and outstanding leaders.

Lall concludes from a study of 23 illiterate boys age 11-16 in an Indian village that three boys had the necessary aptitude for university work. (Lall, 582)

In his 1947 study in the village of Annanpara, with a population of 400, Bhatia investigated 50 boys, half of whom had never been to school. To 23 of them (we are not told how many literate or illiterate) he administered a battery of performance tests. I.Q.'s ranged from 70 to 120 with a median of over 90. He concluded that the superior ones should be helped and encouraged to obtain formal schooling. (Bhatia, 111)

In his Performance Tests of Intelligence, Bhatia concludes that, from results of the special battery of tests bearing his name, the difference between literate and illiterate groups can be determined only by the general environment, and illiterates are not in any sense of the word necessarily dumb or dull. (Bhatia, 81)

In another setting Shapiro, measuring the amount of rotation made by African subjects in reproducing drawings or when manipulating the Kohs blocks, discovered that illiterates rotated more than literates but noted that this was not due to low intelligence at all. (Shapiro, 27)

Very little research has been done in this particular area of measuring the intelligence of illiterate individuals. The evidence at the present time, however, indicates that the illiterate should not be looked upon as a person of low intelligence merely because he lacks the tools of reading and writing. Often, as we have seen, the illiterate is a person with keen perception and judgment. A study of the history of man surely would show that some of the great leaders of men lacked the facility of literacy, when that means merely the ability to read and write.

It seems that those of us who work with illiterates have much to learn from them as to what are their own effective systems and means of communication.

A good measure of the worth of any extension worker is how much he is able to learn from his clients, not merely how much he is able to teach. In fact, good teaching always must include effective learning from one's clients.

COMMUNICATION WITH ILLITERATE PEOPLE

A Definition of Communication

Edward Hall, in The Silent Language, has based his whole cultural analysis on a communications model. He states that "in addition to what we say with our verbal language, we are constantly communicating our real feelings in our silent language - the language of behavior. Sometimes this language is correctly interpreted by other nationals but more often it is not." (Hall, 15)

Sometime ago in the Punjab of West Pakistan, quite by accident, I became aware that culture itself is communication. Jestng with a friend, I gave him my hat and I placed his on my head, without knowledge that this is a Punjabi means of expressing deep friendship and brotherhood. He told me the cultural importance of this act of brotherly love which impressed others in the group a great deal. This simple exchange of headgear is used in the marriage ceremony when two family heads come together to signify publicly that not only the bride and groom but also the two families are now cemented together in friendship and mutual understanding.

An understanding and appreciation of many phenomena, such as time concepts, gestures, reflex-like motions, facial expressions, clothing, hair do, gesture, dance, action language, etc., are very necessary for good communication.

Sapir, in his Language, Ruesch and Kees in their Non Verbal Communication, Doob in Communication in Africa, and others have pointed out the necessity of a very broad definition of communication. (Sapir, 207; Ruesch and Kees, 4; Doob, 4) Therefore, the definition of communication which we will use must be broad. "Communication refers to all the procedures by which one mind may affect another. This, of course, involves not only written or oral speech but all of human behavior." (Ruesch and Kees, 2)

Some Guidelines for the Teaching and Communication
Process with Illiterate People

1. Communication is most effective when we work within the limits of the value constellations of the people concerned. (Schramm, 174)
 - a) The imagery of peoples of different cultures is different.
 - (1) Exposure to a particular kind of climate or culture, and to particular social situations is responsible for the development of widely differing views and individual attitudes. (Eskimos have several conceptions of snow which are reflected in a verbal language (words) that expresses differences in "fallen snow," "snow on ground," "wind driven snow," etc.) (Ruesch and Kees, 9)
 - b) Proverbs and wise sayings of a people contain a large repository of cultural lore and values.
 - (1) Proverbs often are the beginnings of law, the source or ethical injunctions which are used both for instruction of the young and education of the wise. (Riesman, 10; Loch, 102)
 - c) Traditional communication channels, such as Melas, religious festivals, dramas, folk plays, music, etc. often are very effective. (Pickering, 178; Gutierrez, 53; Monograph I, 74-77)
 - (1) Shopkeepers, priestly men, servants and tradesmen can be effective instruments in the communication of ideas.
 - (a) In India one study revealed that illiterate respondents of all ages utilized shopkeepers 45 percent, priestly men 25 percent, and Lickshaw and Tonga men 20 percent as sources of their news. (Monograph I, 70-73)
 - (b) The story teller, letter writer, and pavement picture book library were found to be effective channels in communication for Malayan illiterates. (Chan, 6, 43, 150)
 - (c) The opinion leaders and information controllers (example, shopkeeper who controls a radio) are very effective in communicating ideas to illiterates. (Damle, 70, 268)

2. The illiterate dislikes an attitude of superiority because he often has been swindled, exploited, and deceived by "educated" people.
 - a) A worker must build up confidence if he desires to communicate.
 - b) A worker must relate his teaching to the real needs of illiterate people. (Laubach, 112)
3. As more value is placed on literacy, the problems related to socialization of illiterates tend to increase.
 - a) The illiterate will seek to comply - conceal his illiteracy, or modify his actions to comply with acceptable behavior.
 - b) He will limit participation in situations which stigmatize illiteracy to avoid increasing his shame.
 - c) When portions of the social system need the illiterate's services, those persons who profit from his services will find ways to accommodate his behavior.
 - d) When the illiterate's services are important to the economic life of the community, techniques will be worked out for his partial integration into the community system.
 - e) Due to social pressures the illiterate in a literate society has more adjustment problems, food aversions, and instances of neurotic behavior than illiterates in a preliterate society.
4. In a highly literate society illiterates tend to be themselves with other illiterates.
 - a) They speak, form symbols of prestige and disgrace, and evaluate situations in their own institutionalized terms and norms - dropping the mask of accommodation.
5. There are wide individual differences among illiterates.
6. Many illiterates have normal intelligence and can learn rapidly when proper methods of instruction and communication are utilized.
7. Thinking and behavior in preliterate societies are governed partly by the supposed power of the spoken word.
 - a) Words written down lose emotional overtones.
 - b) Literacy tends to destroy the magic of words.

8. In some preliterate societies a thing exists by virtue of its name.
9. The eye in some African societies is regarded as an instrument of the will.
 - a) The ear is regarded as the main receiving organ.
10. In some preliterate societies thought and behavior are not regarded as separate; both are seen as behavior.
11. Some nonliterate people do not use abstractions in their reasoning processes or, if they do, not to the degree literate people do.
12. Nonliterate rural populations live largely in a world of sounds which are dynamic, or indicators of dynamic things.
13. Oral communication helps to create solidarity in groups.
14. The tempo of life for the illiterate is slower than for the literate
15. The world of the illiterate is not manipulative, instrumental; life is viewed as a whole.
16. Illiterates learn best when learning activities are related to real situations.
 - a) They profit from a considerable amount of over-learning.
 - b) Forgetting takes place unless opportunity is provided for frequent repetition and recall of material.
17. Clear objectives and specific purposes need to be defined in terms of steps to be attained.
18. Strong interest and motivation on the part of both teacher and learner are important.
19. Systematic appraisals to estimate needs, determine guidance and evaluate growth are vital in teaching illiterates.
20. It is important to build and utilize a special vocabulary fitted to the learner's ability.
21. Those who would communicate with illiterates must always be aware that they already are equipped with their own means of communication.

22. Just as the small merchant, the money lender, etc. have to work within the social system of the illiterate, so must anyone else who wants to speak to them with meaning and understanding.
23. The value constellations of officials, landlords, and Western educated nationals must not be confused with those of the illiterate.

Some Communication Media for Illiterates

1. Search for the indigenous methods of communication with which the illiterate already is well acquainted.
 - a) Village drama is an effective communication medium in many areas.
 - (1) In Ghana, Pickering found that it is effective.
 - (a) A knowledge of the power of drama exists.
 - (b) It is related to local custom and social tradition.
 - (c) It provides active participation on the part of both actors and audience.
(Pickering, 178)
 - (2) The theatre was found to be effective in Latin America. (Gutierrez, 53)
 - b) Melas, religious festivals, dramas, folkplays, Katha, Kirtan, Satsang, and others were found to be effective in India and Pakistan. (Monograph I, 74-77)
 - c) The story teller and picture books without words are traditional methods in Malaya. (Chan, 6-9)
2. Indiscriminate use of so called "modern" communication media is not effective with illiterates.
 - a) All audio-visual materials must be adapted to the culture where they are used.
 - (1) Films produced in distant lands generally are not effective.
 - (2) Movies, jeeps, and mobile units often overawe the illiterate villager; he views such an approach as "foreign" or just a new trick.
 - (3) Visual materials designed for literates usually are not suitable because so often these assume values that no villager of the particular area is likely to have.
(Schramm, 174)

- b) Mass action by audio-visual techniques accompanying a campaign of information does not exclude a deeper educational impact.
- c) Too many media provide only a one-way communication process which tends to make people passive.
- d) Those media which provide opportunities for participation by the people are most effective.
- e) Cheap devices produced locally are becoming more and more popular and effective when used wisely.
(Weber, 57; Leflan, 164-166)
- f) Visual aids profusely displayed in the teaching situation are most distracting. (Goldberg, 189)
- g) There is value in using a variety of well-chosen visual aids and methods related to the needs of the learners and the subject matter. (Witty, 134-135)
- h) There are several basic factors to consider in selecting teaching methods.
 - (1) What do you wish to accomplish - your objectives.
 - (2) Relative importance of the activity.
 - (a) Number of persons you wish to interest.
 - (b) Who are those you wish to reach?
 - (c) The economic, social, and cultural importance of the activity - nature of your subject matter.
 - (3) Amount of time you expect to devote.
 - (a) Period of time the activity covers.
 - (b) Relative importance of the activity.
 - (c) Interrelation of methods.
 - (d) Contributions leaders can make
 - (e) How much follow-up may be needed.
 - (f) Number of persons you try to reach.
 - (4) Stages of development of activity - knowledge, interests of people present.
 - (5) Adaptability of method to local situation and subject matter involved.
 - (6) Suitability of method to number of people you wish to reach. (Leagans, class handout)
- i) Whatever methods are used they are not an end in themselves, but a means to helping people improve themselves morally, socially, spiritually, and economically.

- j) The transistor radio is becoming an effective means of communication with language groups dispersed within countries when messages relate to cultural values and needs of the people.
- k) Authoritarian states constantly try to control the thoughts of men by communication media; our goal is to educate men to learn to live free and make their own decisions.

CONCLUSION

Work with illiterates presents many complex problems as well as a largely unexplored frontier of tremendous challenge. There are basic differences between literates and illiterates but present research has only begun to delineate these differences. One major conclusion which we can safely draw, however, is that the illiterates around the world are already equipped in their own means of communication. If we would communicate with them effectively we must do so through media which are familiar to them or which are adapted to their understanding and basic needs. Indeed, the illiterate has much to teach literates about communication and we would profit much by "sitting at his feet" in a spirit of discovery.

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